

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

## WHAT IS THE SMART GROWTH LAW?

In 1999, the Comprehensive Planning Law was adopted in Wisconsin. The law was developed to provide a framework for planning throughout the state. Up until that time, some communities were planning, but many more were making land use decisions without a long-range plan in place. Plans that did exist varied greatly from community to community with respect to their format, content, and ultimate use in the decision-making process.

The intent of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law is to provide an open, public planning process that can result in quality, community-based plans. Plans developed under the law are rich with information about present conditions, desired future conditions and supporting goals, objectives and policies aimed at achieving the future vision of the community.

## EVANSVILLE'S PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Evansville decided to develop this plan to have a more effective tool to address the City's rapid growth rate (the fastest in Rock County) and desire to maintain its "small-town" charm. Evansville is a very desirable place to live. The growth rates certainly reflect this fact, but also, in the community survey prepared as part of this planning process, 94% of respondents indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with Evansville as a place to live. The City wants to ensure that new development doesn't adversely impact the character of the City or resident satisfaction with Evansville as a place to live.

Throughout the planning program, Evansville felt it was important to solicit input from the many different stakeholders living and working in the City. Therefore, the City facilitated a public planning process that offered varied opportunities for public participation including regular meetings, special events, a community-wide survey and an interactive internet web site. The input from local stakeholders served as a guide in the development of this plan. Accordingly, information from the community survey and public meetings is highlighted throughout the plan.

Evansville's progressive planning program was lead by a volunteer group called the Evansville Smart Growth Plan Committee (SGPC). The SGPC included interested citizens, members of the City Planning Commission, City Council Alderman, a representative from the Evansville Community School District, representatives from neighboring towns, the Mayor, and the City Administrator. The SGPC took on the task of drafting this plan document with technical assistance provided by OMNNI Associates (an Appleton-based consulting firm).

## WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

This plan is divided into twelve chapters organized around the required plan elements described in the planning law.

- The **Introduction** provides additional information about the state planning law and past City planning efforts.
- The **Issues and Opportunities** Chapter highlights the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as identified by local stakeholders. This information served as the foundation for understanding what is working in Evansville and what could be improved.

- The **Community Profile** examines important local demographic, economic, and housing facts and trends.
- From there, the plan moves into a series of chapters dedicated to specific topics (e.g. **housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, natural resources, cultural resources, economic development**). Each of these chapters includes a vision for the future, an inventory of existing conditions and a series of policies aimed at reaching the vision. Some of the important topics discussed in these chapters include the need to maintain adequate sewer and water infrastructure to accommodate urban development, the need for a variety of housing to meet the different needs of Evansville's residents, street connectivity, walkable development patterns and economic expansion to support the tax base and provide quality local employment and shopping choices.
- Chapters 9 and 10 focus on **land use**. Chapter 9 profiles existing conditions, codes, and trends. Chapter 10 highlights themes for planning in Evansville and concludes with *Future Land Use Maps* that will serve as a guide for decision-making.
- The next chapter profiles the relationship between Evansville and its **intergovernmental** partners with respect to planning and development (e.g. WisDOT, WDNR, nearby towns, Rock County, Evansville Community School District and others). A central point in the chapter is the need to expand partnerships with neighboring towns and the Evansville Community School District.
- Finally, the **Implementation Element** provides specific goals and objectives related to each of the required plan elements for the City to pursue over the next 20 years.

## THEMES FOR PLANNING IN EVANSVILLE

In developing this plan five important themes were defined. These themes provide a framework for understanding future development in Evansville. The themes are discussed at length in Chapter 10, but as a means of introduction, the themes are:

1. Balance the desire for continued growth with the desire to maintain the City's small-town atmosphere.
2. Design new residential development to be more attractive to people who want to live in an urban rather than a rural setting.
3. Improve mobility and accessibility options available within a comprehensive transportation network.
4. Provide areas for and create a climate to encourage new service/retail/office commercial and light industrial development.
5. Provide abundant recreational choices for residents of all ages with varying interest and desires.

## **A VISION FOR 2025**

This plan incorporates the vision previously developed by the Evansville Community Partnership at the 2001 Community Identity Workshop into the overall vision for the community.

### **OVERALL VISION FOR 2025**

**Evansville is a unique, thriving, and prosperous community that invites opportunity for involvement from all in creating and implementing our shared dreams.**

**We envision Evansville as a community that values cooperation and harmony among government, the private sector, citizens, civic organizations and surrounding communities. This cooperation creates the continuity vital to economic opportunity that serves the requirements of residents and visitors in our downtown and outlying business districts. We enjoy community support regarding the stewardship of our people, natural, historical and financial resources.**

**To accomplish this, our community respects different points of view. We are filled with the spirit of neighborliness, compassion, cooperation and mutual respect for all.**

## **A COMMITMENT TO PLANNING**

Consistent with Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, Evansville will use this plan as a guide when making land use decisions. The plan is a living document and must be reviewed and revised frequently to ensure that it remains an up-to-date and effective decision-making tool. To that end, the Evansville Plan Commission will annually review the goals and objectives presented in this plan.